

SENATE—Friday, June 9, 2000

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Father Paul Lavin, pastor, St. Joseph's Church on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

Cry out full throated and unsparingly,
Lift up your voice like a trumpet blast;
Is this the manner of fasting I wish,
Of keeping a day of penance:
That a man bow his head like a reed,
And lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Do you call this a fast,
A day acceptable to the Lord?
This, rather, is the fasting I wish,
Releasing those bound unjustly,
Untying the thongs of the yoke;
Setting free the oppressed,
Breaking every yoke;
Sharing your bread with the hungry,
Sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;
Clothing the naked when you see them,
And not turning your back on your own.
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

And your wound shall quickly be healed;
Your vindication shall go before you,
And the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer,
You shall cry for help, and he will say:
Here I am!

If you remove from your midst oppression,
False accusation and malicious speech;
If you bestow your bread on the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted;
Then light shall rise for you in the darkness,

And the gloom shall become for you the midday;

Then the Lord will guide you always
And give you plenty even on the parched land.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of mercy, who through Your Son gave us a marvelous example of charity and the great commandment of love for one another. Send down Your blessings on these United States, and send Your blessings on the men and women who serve in this Senate. Give them wisdom; Give them insight; Give them courage; Give them strength. Let them faithfully serve You in their neighbor. Glory and praise to You for ever and ever. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable L. CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE) The Senator from Alaska.

SCHEDULE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense appropriations bill. Under the order, there will be up to 10 minutes of debate on the pending Grassley amendment regarding accounting, with the vote to occur at approximately 9:40 on that amendment.

Following the vote, the Senate will continue debate on this Appropriations bill, with further amendments expected to be offered.

Again, Senator INOUE and I invite our friends to bring amendments to the floor now so that we might consider adopting them at this time.

It is hoped that the consideration of the Defense appropriations bill can be completed early next week.

We hope it will be by Tuesday so that we can take up one of the other bills. We will have several bills ready to take up by midweek next week. We hope to be able to get to them and get them to conference before the Fourth of July recess.

We thank our colleagues for their cooperation on this bill.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator JOHN KERRY, I ask unanimous consent that he be permitted to be absent from the service of the Senate on Friday, June 9—today—due to family illness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 4576, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4576) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Grassley amendment No. 3279, to require the Department of Defense to match certain disbursements with obligations prior to payment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate on amendment No. 3279 with the time equally divided.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might consume, obviously up to the limit, but I will not use all of it.

I will make a few brief remarks about the pending amendment which I laid down last night and spoke shortly on that particular time. My amendment requires the Department of Defense to match disbursements with obligations before making payments.

I know this sounds like commonsense stuff—it is really basic accounting 101—but it goes to a very major problem we have within the Department of Defense. They don't always make payments based on invoices. They don't always match the check being mailed out for certain goods or services received.

I am sure my colleagues must be wondering why the Senator from Iowa has to offer an amendment such as this. They must be asking themselves this question: Isn't DOD already doing it?

Unfortunately, the fact remains that the Pentagon bureaucrats are not doing it.

Businesses do it on a routine basis. And most citizens do it, too. You just don't write out a check and pay a bill until you are absolutely certain that you owe the money. You must first verify that you have a legitimate obligation to pay the bill. And you have enough money in the bank to cover it.

This amendment and device that has been used now for several years to try to straighten things out in the Pentagon is a handy device also for deterring fraud. And it helps to prevent mismanagement and other abuses in the Pentagon's vast financial accounts.

This policy has been incorporated in the last six appropriations acts.

Each year we have ratcheted down the threshold or dollar level where the matching must be done.

In 1995, we started out with payments of \$5 million.

Each year since then, we have gradually lowered the threshold but always keeping the pressure on for reform.

Last year the Senate voted to lower the threshold to \$500,000.

This year—in the amendment—I am recommending that the threshold be maintained at \$500,000.